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Background brief on population policy

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the development of population policy in Hong Kong. It also summarizes the major views and concerns raised by Members during discussions on issues relating to population policy in the Fifth Legislative Council ("LegCo").

Background

Development of population policy in Hong Kong

2. The urgent need for development of a comprehensive population policy was raised as early as July 2002 in the Inaugural Speech of the Chief Executive ("CE"). Subsequently, the Government set up the Task Force on Population Policy in September 2002 with a view to, among others, identifying the major challenges to Hong Kong arising from its demographic trends and characteristics. In its report released in February 2003, the Task Force laid down the key objective of Hong Kong's population policy as to secure and nurture a quality population for sustaining the development of Hong Kong as a knowledge-based economy.

3. In October 2007, the Government set up the Steering Committee on Population Policy ("SCPP") chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration ("CS") to monitor and co-ordinate efforts on population policy. In his 2010-2011 Policy Address, CE tasked the Steering Committee to focus its study on (a) ways to facilitate and support elderly people to settle on the Mainland after retirement, and (b) ramifications of children born in Hong Kong to Mainland women returning to Hong Kong to study and live. In the light of the findings of the study, CE proposed in

his 2011-2012 Policy Address to (a) set up a new "Guangdong Scheme"¹ and (b) step up dissemination of information on the local education system to help Mainland families with Hong Kong-born children consider whether and how to arrange their children to return to Hong Kong for schooling.

4. On 30 May 2012, the Government released the *Steering Committee on Population Policy Progress Report 2012* setting out 10 recommendations for addressing the short-term and long-term demographic challenges facing Hong Kong. These 10 recommendations broadly revolved around three major areas, namely (a) Mainland women coming to give birth in Hong Kong, (b) an ageing and shrinking labour force, and (c) supporting the elderly.

5. The current-term Government reconstituted SCPP in December 2012 with the appointment, for the first time, of 11 non-official members from various fields² to the committee for a term of two years from 1 December 2012 to 30 November 2014. The expanded membership sought to facilitate the Government to tap more professional and diverse views when deliberating population policy.

6. On 24 October 2013, SCPP launched a four-month public engagement exercise with the release of a consultation paper on population policy. The Social Sciences Research Centre of the University of Hong Kong ("HKU") was commissioned by the Government to conduct an independent analysis of and compile a report on the views received during the public engagement exercise. The report was released on 4 July 2014³.

7. On completion of the public engagement exercise, SCPP agreed that a five-pronged strategy should be adopted to deal with the demographic challenges facing Hong Kong -

- (a) **Unleashing the potential of local labour force:** creating a conducive environment to draw more women and mature persons into the labour market;
- (b) **Enhancing quality of home-grown talent:** sustaining economic development to provide more diversified job opportunities with promising prospects for younger generation, and improving education and training to equip young people with skills needed by our economy;

¹ The Guangdong Scheme, which aims to provide the Old Age Allowance for eligible Hong Kong elderly residents who choose to reside in Guangdong, was launched on 1 October 2013.

² The non-official members came from academic, human resources management, business, social services, healthcare and education fields.

³ The report can be found at http://www.hkpopulation.gov.hk/public_engagement/en/report.html.

- (c) **Attracting outside talent and importation of labour:** adopting a more proactive and targeted approach to attract more outside talent to work and settle in Hong Kong, and considering more effective labour importation arrangements for industries suffering from persistent manpower shortage without jeopardizing the interests of local workers;
- (d) **Fostering a supportive environment for forming and raising families;** and
- (e) **Embracing opportunities in an ageing society:** building an age-friendly environment, promoting active ageing and tapping the valuable pool of elderly resources.

8. On the basis of the population policy objective⁴ and the five-pronged strategy as recommended by SCPP, the Administration formulated concrete measures for inclusion in the 2015 Policy Address and the policies of relevant bureaux. These measures were set out in the report on "Population Policy – Strategies and Initiatives" ("the Report") released by CS on 15 January 2015.

9. The SCPP was restructured on 1 December 2014 after expiry of its two-year term of office on 30 November 2014. CS continues to chair the committee with membership comprising relevant Directors of Bureaux and Heads of Departments. According to the terms of reference of the current term of SCPP, it would focus on, among others, overseeing the implementation and reviewing the effectiveness of the measures formulated to tackle the challenges brought about by the ageing population.

Discussions at the House Committee and other committees

10. Population policy and related issues were discussed by Members at the special meetings of the House Committee on 22 March 2013, 8 November 2013 and 7 February 2014, and at meetings of various committees, including Panel on Education, Panel on Health Services, Panel on Manpower, Panel on Security, Panel on Welfare Services, Panel on Public Service, Panel on Development, Joint Subcommittee on

⁴ The objective of Hong Kong's population policy as recommended by SCPP is: "To develop and nurture a population that will continuously support and drive Hong Kong's socio-economic development as Asia's world city, and to engender a socially inclusive and cohesive society that allows individuals to realize their potential, with a view to attaining quality life for all residents and families."

Long-term Care Policy and Subcommittee on Retirement Protection. Members' major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Population targets and population cap

11. Some Members were of the view that targets should be set for the optimal size and mix for Hong Kong's population, as the Administration should have regard to not only population projections, but also and more importantly, population targets in formulating corresponding policies and planning the provision of public services.

12. According to the Administration, it had all along based on, among others, the population projection figures which were updated regularly by the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD") in planning the future land use and provision of public services. On the other hand, C&SD would take into account the latest government policies and measures in conducting each round of population projection. The Administration considered it appropriate to maintain the existing practice.

13. Some Members asked whether the Administration had conducted any study on the level of population that Hong Kong could support, having regard to the constraint in resources such as land supply. There was a view that while it might not be feasible to set a cap on Hong Kong's population, the Administration should consider devising appropriate measures to slow down the pace of population growth before more land could be identified and developed to meet the population's housing and other needs.

14. As advised by the Administration, Hong Kong's population grew by only 0.6% per annum on average over the past decade, with natural increase (i.e. births less deaths) and new arrivals coming to Hong Kong for family union under the One-way Permit ("OWP") Scheme being the main sources of population growth. Given that population growth was crucial to boosting the workforce, coping with an ageing population and maintaining economic competitiveness, the Administration considered it not appropriate to set a population cap or slow down the pace of population growth. In the Administration's view, Hong Kong's population policy should be founded on a sustainable development strategy that was capable of keeping the economic vibrancy of Hong Kong while providing a better quality of life for its people. To this end, the Development Bureau and the Planning Department would coordinate the updating of the "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy" published in 2007 by examining the strategies and feasible options for overall spatial planning, land and infrastructure developments for Hong Kong beyond 2030.

Unleashing the potential of local labour force

Women employment

15. To unleash economically inactive females to join the workforce, Members urged the Administration to create a supportive environment conducive to these women to enter or rejoin the labour force, while balancing their needs to take care of their families at the same time. Apart from providing relevant training and retraining courses, Members were of the view that provision of comprehensive subsidized child care services and after-school care services with extended service hours was crucial to fostering female homemakers to join the labour force. Some Members also suggested that to meet the imminent needs for child care services, the Administration should attract more carers to join the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project⁵ by raising the allowance for these carers to a level not lower than the Statutory Minimum Wage rate.

16. According to the Administration, it would launch a series of measures to enhance child care services to help women balance their work and family commitments, including the provision of about 5 000 additional places of Extended Hours Service ("EHS") at aided child care centres and kindergarten-cum-child care centres from 2015-2016 onwards and the strengthening of the after-school care services. In response to Members' concern about the distribution of and timetable for providing the additional EHS places, the Administration explained that it aimed at providing the additional places in phases and 1 200 additional places would be provided in the 2015-2016 financial year with priority accorded to districts with high demand such as Shatin, Kwun Tong and Shum Shui Po. The Administration would discuss with the child care centres concerned the suitable timing for providing the remaining places.

17. Noting the emerging consensus of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education ("the KG Committee") appointed by the Education Bureau that free kindergarten education should cover only half-day service as the basic provision for all eligible children, some Members pointed out that there was a strong demand for whole-day and long whole-day kindergarten services, especially from families of single or working parents. They urged the Administration and the KG Committee to consider including such services in the provision of free kindergarten education.

⁵ The Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project, which aims to provide needy parents with more flexible child care service and foster mutual help and care in the community, was first launched on a pilot basis in 2008. The service has been regularized and extended to all 18 districts since October 2011.

18. The KG Committee advised that while it appreciated that half-day, whole-day and long whole-day kindergartens had been providing useful services to cater for the needs of different families, it was important to distinguish between the availability of services (i.e. provision) and subsidy (i.e. use of public resources) in the implementation of free kindergarten education. The KG Committee would study ways to encourage kindergartens to provide more full-day services and would consider providing needy families with subsidized whole-day and long whole-day services. The KG Committee would publish its report in mid-2015.

19. To encourage more females to join the workforce, some Members were of the view that the Administration should enhance the protection and benefits of those female employees who were not engaged under a continuous contract as they were not entitled to certain employment benefits under the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) ("EO"). The Administration advised that it was reviewing the continuous contract requirements under EO, and several approaches had been put forward for deliberation of the Labour Advisory Board ("LAB"). The Administration would revert to the Panel on Manpower after LAB's deliberation on the results of its consultation with employers' associations and employees' unions.

Extending working life

20. Members noted that while there was no statutory retirement age in Hong Kong, many organizations had set the retirement age of their employees at 60. Having regard to the better health condition, higher education levels and rich experience among the current and future elderly generations, Members expressed general support for a longer working life to help address the problem of a shrinking labour force in Hong Kong. Members, however, stressed the need to strike a balance between promoting a longer working life and not hindering the career prospects of younger generations.

21. While Members generally supported the Administration's plan to extend the retirement age for new recruits joining the civil service from mid-2015 to 65 in respect of civilian grades and 60 in respect of the disciplined services grades, some Members were of the view that the Administration should give all serving civil servants the option to extend their service beyond their current retirement age up to the retirement age to be set for new recruits without going through any selection by the management. These Members pointed out that to do so should not adversely impact on the promotion prospects of younger serving officers, as younger serving officers also had the same option to extend their service and they could have the chance to fill vacancies at the promotion ranks upon the retirement of the post-holders.

22. The Administration advised that as there would be no anticipated significant succession or recruitment problems across-the-board over the coming decade or so, it was mindful of the management problems which might come with automatic extension of the service of serving civil servants, including manpower mismatch and adverse impacts on the employment prospects of younger generations and promotion prospects of serving civil servants. The Administration considered it more appropriate to devise a mechanism through which management could flexibly retain staff beyond retirement age in the light of operational needs, succession planning and recruitment situation. A scheme would be introduced for employing retired civil servants on contract terms, on a targeted basis, to fill non-directorate positions requiring specific civil service expertise or experience. The control regime of post-service employment for non-directorate civil servants at junior ranks would also be streamlined to facilitate their taking up of outside work after retirement.

23. Members enquired whether, under the premise of not legislating for retirement age, the Administration would consider providing financial incentives (such as subsidies and tax concessions) or introducing other specific measures to encourage employers in the private sector to follow suit in extending the working life of their employees. Some Members were also concerned about the elderly-friendly measures taken by the Administration to assist the early retirees and elderly people to remain in or return to the job market.

24. The Administration advised that the Government's decision to extend the retirement age for government employees was expected to have a demonstration effect to the private sector. In addition, the Labour Department would launch various promotional and educational activities to publicize relevant messages across the community and encourage employers to adopt elderly-friendly employment practices at workplaces. The Administration would continue to provide on-the-job training allowance of up to \$3,000 per month for employers of mature job seekers for a period of three to six months under the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged. It would extend the Programme to cover part-time jobs in the second half of 2015. Moreover, the Employees Retraining Board would, among other target groups, provide training for the elderly in the future, and help elderly people rejoin the job market.

Relaxing the age limit for Category B security personnel

25. Some Members pointed out that several industries, such as security personnel, had their own statutory age limits. They urged the Administration to conduct a thorough review of the relevant legislation to explore the feasibility of relaxing the statutory limits to tackle the problem of a shrinking labour force.

26. The Administration had recently announced, in the context of the 2015 Policy Address, that after reviewing the age restrictions in relevant legislation, it would propose to relax the current upper age limit of 65 for Category B security personnel permit ("SPP") from 65 to 70 and introduce a medical check requirement for Category B SPP holders aged 65 or above. Considering that the proposal would ease the manpower shortage problem in the security service industry, Members expressed general support for the proposal. Some Members expressed the view that the fees for the medical check under the proposal should not be borne by employees. Some Members also expressed concern about the applicability of the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme to Category B SPP holders aged 65 or above.

27. According to the Administration, the biennial medical check requirement for Category B SPP would basically be the same as that for Category A SPP, the holders of which had to pay for their own medical check at a cost of around \$200. The proposed medical check requirement was considered reasonable, balancing the needs for ensuring the quality of the industry and not imposing undue burden on permit holders.

One-Way Permit Scheme

28. Some Members pointed out that Mainland immigrants entering Hong Kong under the OWP Scheme were mostly with low academic qualification and skills. They were concerned that the Administration could not control the quality of Mainland immigrants. Noting that the number of males per 1 000 females in Hong Kong's population was projected to fall to 786 in 2041, some Members cautioned that such an imbalance between the male and female populations might not only impact upon the labour force participation rate but also create social problems such as lowering marriage and fertility rates. They enquired whether the Administration would adjust its immigration policy through, for instance, taking over the vetting and approval of applications under the OWP Scheme or introduce concrete measures to promote child-bearing to address the situation.

29. The Administration advised that the number of cross-boundary marriages with Hong Kong female residents marrying males from the Mainland had been on the rise in recent years. In the Administration's view, it was premature to conclude at this stage that government intervention was necessary to redress the projected imbalance between the male and female populations.

30. The Administration further stressed that the OWP Scheme was designed primarily for family reunion and new arrivals on the strength of

the scheme were among the important sources of population growth in Hong Kong. The qualification of successful applicants had been improved in recent years and most of them were in the working age. The Administration further advised that the OWP Scheme had a firm constitutional basis. Pursuant to the Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 22(4) of the Basic Law in June 1999, the application, approval and issue of OWPs fell within the remit of the Mainland authorities, which had from time to time adjusted and refined the scheme. At this stage, the Administration did not see any justifications or needs to change the existing OWP Scheme or approval arrangements. Nevertheless, it would continue to exchange views on the related policy with the Mainland authorities.

31. Noting that the average number of Mainland residents who came to Hong Kong in the past 10 years under the OWP Scheme had been less than the daily quota of 150 places, some Members asked whether the Administration had discussed with the Mainland authorities the possibility of allowing more categories of Mainland residents to come to Hong Kong under the scheme, and allocating a certain quota for Mainland single parents to come to Hong Kong to take care of their young children.

32. The Administration advised that the daily quota of 150 places under the OWP Scheme was determined by the Mainland after discussions with the Administration. Since 1 April 2011, Mainland "overage children"⁶ of Hong Kong residents could apply for OWP by phases⁷ to come to Hong Kong for reunion with their natural parents. On Members' concern about the time needed for processing all the applications by Mainland "overage children", the Administration advised that it was difficult to assess the number of Mainland "overage children" involved, which was in the region of tens of thousands. As at end 2013, about 37 000 overage children had been issued OWPs to come to Hong Kong. In respect of Mainland single parents of Hong Kong born children, they were outside the categories of persons eligible to apply for OWP. The Administration had provided information about cases in need of special assistance to the relevant Mainland authorities and there had been cases in which Mainland authorities had exercised discretion to issue OWPs or one-year multiple exit endorsements for visiting relatives to some of these single parents⁸.

⁶ The term "overage children" refers to those Mainland persons who (a) were under the age of 14 when their natural fathers or mothers, before 1 November 2001, obtained their Hong Kong identity cards; and (b) turned 14 while awaiting approval and hence lost their eligibility status.

⁷ Starting from 20 January 2015, the Mainland authorities accept another round of applications for OWPs from overage children whose natural fathers or mothers obtained their first Hong Kong identity cards on or before 31 December 1986.

⁸ In January 2015, HC agreed that a subcommittee be appointed under HC to study issues relating to Mainland-HKSAR families. The subcommittee is on the waiting list pending activation.

Children born to Mainland women

33. For babies born to Mainland women in Hong Kong whose spouses were Hong Kong permanent residents ("Type I babies"), some of them were brought up on the Mainland due to childcare arrangements. Members considered that arrangements should be made to facilitate the early arrival of these children so that they could integrate into the local community and education system at a young age. As their arrival date depended on when OWPs were issued to their Mainland mothers, Members urged the Administration to raise the issue of shortening the waiting time for issuing OWPs with the relevant Mainland authorities. According to the Administration, the waiting time for these children had been shortened to around four years since 2009. These children could still start their education in Hong Kong at a young age and should not have insurmountable problem settling in Hong Kong. Some Members considered that the waiting time should be further shortened to three years or less.

34. As regards babies born to Mainland women in Hong Kong whose spouses were not Hong Kong permanent residents ("Type II babies"), Members were concerned that it was uncertain whether and when these children, who were Hong Kong residents by birth, might come back to study and live in Hong Kong. Members urged the Administration to give due attention to the number of such children who would be settling in Hong Kong in planning ahead the resources required to meet the service needs of these children and their families, such as healthcare, education, transport, housing and employment. Some Members were of the view that the Administration's measures to cope with the increase in demand for public services from Type II children, particularly education services, were piecemeal and unsatisfactory.

35. The Administration explained that the uncertainty of whether and if so when Type II children would return to Hong Kong had made it difficult to plan for their demand for the local public services. Nevertheless, the Administration would endeavour to reflect the impact of Mainland women giving birth in Hong Kong in the population and household projections to be updated every two to three years by C&SD. These projections would form a common basis for the Administration's planning in various programme areas.

36. One of the challenges brought by Type II babies to the provision of education services was the increase in cross-boundary students ("CBS")⁹. Members noted with concern the shortfall of Primary One places in the North District as a result of the surge in the number of CBS. According to the Administration, following the implementation of the "zero delivery quota" for Mainland expectant mothers in early 2013, the number of CBS was expected to decrease gradually in the coming few years. Since it was difficult to predict accurately whether and when babies born to Mainland women in Hong Kong would return to Hong Kong for education, the Administration would adopt flexible arrangements to cope with the demand for school places, which included borrowing school places from neighbouring school nets, and exploring the feasibility of recycling vacant school premises and building more classrooms in individual schools. To address the shortfall of Primary One places in the North District, the Education Bureau had provided applicant children residing on the Mainland with a separate Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation under the Primary One Admission System with a view to diverting them to other districts.

Enhancing local talent

Vocational education

37. Noting that the unemployment rate for young people was relatively higher than the overall employment rate in Hong Kong, some Members considered that the unemployment problem of young people was largely attributed to the failure of the existing education system in meeting the different needs of young people at school age. Members urged the Administration to inject more diversity into the education system to give students more choices in the selection of schools and curricula which could cater for individual aptitude and interests. Some Members also stressed the importance of business-school collaboration as the involvement of enterprises was crucial in the provision of attachment and practical training.

38. Members were advised that as highlighted in the 2014 Policy Address, the positioning of vocational education in the education system would be re-established in the light of the ageing population and the impending succession gaps in the skilled labour industries. Members

⁹ In response to Members' request, the Administration had provided information on (a) the proportion of those under the age of 18 among arrivals on the strength of OWP from 2003 to 2012 (LC Paper No. CB(2)1598/12-13(01)); and (b) the number of cross-boundary students admitted to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools from 2003-2004 to 2012-2013 school years (LC Paper No. CB(2)1598/12-13(02)).

noted the implementation of new initiatives such as the Pilot Training and Support Scheme¹⁰ and the establishment of the Task Force on Promotion of Vocation Education¹¹ tasked to map out a strategy to promote vocational education and raise public awareness and recognition towards vocational education. Members also noted that the Youth Employment and Training Programme launched by LD provided one-stop pre-employment and on-the-job training for young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree or below.

39. Members supported in principle the implementation of the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors ("SSSDP") in the 2015-2016 academic year to subsidize local students to pursue higher education. Some Members were concerned whether consideration would be given to extending SSSDP to cover other disciplines and to increasing the number of subsidized places currently set at 1 000 students per cohort. The Administration advised that to be eligible for subsidy under SSSDP, the study programmes must be full-time locally accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines to meet Hong Kong's imminent economic and social needs. The SSSDP would be implemented on a pilot basis for three cohorts and then subject to review on its scope and other aspects of operation.

Higher education

40. Members generally considered that the existing provision of 15 000 University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded first-year-first-degree places per annum should be increased to address the demand for university education from secondary school graduates who met the general entrance requirements. The pace of progressively increasing the number of subsidized senior-year undergraduate intake places for sub-degree holders to 5 000 per annum by the 2018-2019 academic year should also be expedited.

41. The Administration advised that currently, some 38% of young people in the relevant cohort had access to degree-level education, including both publicly-funded and self-financing degree programmes. About 70% of them had access to post-secondary education, if sub-degree education was also included. This participation rate was comparable to those of other jurisdictions which ranged from 58% to 71%. In considering whether the number of UGC-funded undergraduate places

¹⁰ The pilot Training and Support Scheme was launched by the Vocational Training Council in 2014 to integrate structured apprenticeship training programmes with clear career progression pathways for relevant industries, benefitting 2 000 trainees.

¹¹ The Task Force on promotion of Vocational Education, which was set up under the Education Bureau in mid-2014, will submit a report to the Government in the middle of 2015.

should be adjusted, the Administration would take into account all relevant factors including the decline in secondary student population. Regarding the progressive increase in senior-year undergraduate places, it was necessary to allow time for the institutions to recruit teaching staff and enhance the necessary facilities to cope with the increase.

Healthcare manpower

42. Members were concerned about the anticipated shortage of healthcare manpower in the public healthcare sector in the face of an ageing population. Given that a medical student was required to undergo five years of undergraduate study and at least six years of specialist training to become a specialist, many Members considered that apart from increasing the number of first-year-first-degree places in medicine, the Administration should facilitate more overseas-trained doctors who were Hong Kong residents to return to practise in Hong Kong.

43. The Administration advised that the Steering Committee on Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development ("the Steering Committee") was established in January 2012 to conduct a strategic review on the long-term manpower requirements of the 13 healthcare professions which are subject to statutory regulation¹² up to the year of 2041. To assist the Steering Committee in making informed recommendations, the Administration had commissioned HKU to develop a generic healthcare manpower forecasting model that suited the local circumstances. Pending the outcome of the study being conducted by HKU, it had discussed with UGC an interim arrangement to increase the publicly-funded first-year-first-degree places in medicine, dentistry and other healthcare professionals in the 2016-2017 to 2018-2019 funding triennium for universities, so as to ensure an adequate supply of local talents for meeting the healthcare needs of the population. Members also noted the measures implemented/planned to facilitate more overseas-trained doctors who were Hong Kong residents to return to practise in Hong Kong, including increasing the frequency of the licensing examination organized by the Medical Council of Hong Kong from once to twice a year starting from 2014, and introducing more flexibility into the internship arrangement to encourage more overseas-trained doctors to register for practice in Hong Kong.

¹² The 13 healthcare professions are medical practitioners, dentists, dental hygienists, nurses, midwives, Chinese medicine practitioners, pharmacists, chiropractors, medical laboratory technologists, occupational therapists, optometrists, radiographers and physiotherapists.

44. Members were concerned about the timetable for the Steering Committee to complete the strategic review, which had fallen far behind the original schedule of end of 2013. Members were advised that given the complexity of the task and the longer than expected time required for data collection, the Administration's latest plan was to complete the strategic review in 2015.

Attracting talent from outside

Drawing up a talent list

45. Some Members were of the view that the Administration should expeditiously draw up a list of the skills, knowledge and professional areas which were in shortage of talents, so as to facilitate the formulation of targeted measures to attract the talents needed from outside to support Hong Kong's development. Some Members, however, expressed concern that admitting foreign professionals to Hong Kong would deprive the local young people of employment opportunities and impede upward mobility of the younger generation. The Administration advised that as set out in the 2015 Policy Address, it would study, having regard to overseas experience, the feasibility of drawing up a talent list to attract, in a more effective and focused manner, high-quality talents to support Hong Kong's development as a diversified and high value-added economy. The study, however, had not yet started.

46. In response to a Member's enquiry about how the Administration would position Hong Kong as an international city to attract global talents, the Administration advised that the objective of Hong Kong's population policy as recommended by SCPP was to, among others, develop and nurture a population that would continuously support and drive Hong Kong's socio-economic development as Asia's world city. The Administration had all along spared no effort in promoting Hong Kong as an international city through the 11 overseas Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices ("HKETOs") and 4 ETOs on the Mainland.

Refining existing talent admission arrangements

47. When the Panel on Security was briefed on the relevant policy initiatives in the 2015 Policy Address, Members were advised that the Administration would relax the stay arrangements for entrants under the General Employment Policy ("GEP")¹³, the Admission Scheme for

¹³ GEP is a quota-free employment-based scheme for attracting professionals possessing skills and knowledge not readily available locally from overseas places other than the Mainland to work in Hong Kong. In 2014, 31 676 overseas professionals were admitted under GEP.

Mainland Talents and Professionals ("ASMTP")¹⁴ and the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme ("QMAS")¹⁵ to attract more talent from outside Hong Kong to meet the population challenges of an ageing population and declining workforce.

48. Some Members expressed concern about the need for the relaxation of stay arrangements for entrants under GEP and ASMTP and the replacement of local graduates with Mainland professionals. These Members considered that the admission of professionals should only be the last resort after all other means of tackling manpower shortage had been exhausted. The Administration should also examine how the manpower needs of the sectors concerned could be addressed through the provision of relevant education and training.

49. According to the Administration, entrants admitted under GEP and ASMTP must possess skills and knowledge not readily available or in shortage in Hong Kong. The proposal only involved relaxation of their stay pattern in Hong Kong. The Administration stressed that it was dedicated to training local people to meet the specific needs of different sectors. However, there might be periods when there was a gap between local manpower supply and the needs of different sectors. The admission of talents sought to fill such a gap. The admission of talents under QMAS was examined on a case-by-case basis by the Advisory Committee on Admission of Quality Migrants and Professionals. There was a quota of 1 000 persons per year for QMAS and the average number admitted was around 400 persons per year. There was no question of replacement of local graduates with Mainland professionals.

50. Pointing out that many self-financed post-secondary institutions were admitting an increasing number of non-local students who might apply to stay and work in Hong Kong after graduation under the prevailing immigration arrangement, some Members expressed concern about the impact brought about by these non-local graduates on Hong Kong's population policy. The Administration responded that non-local graduates who chose to stay and work in Hong Kong would be able to provide a much-needed boost to the local labour force and contribute to Hong Kong's economic growth and development.

¹⁴ ASMTP was introduced in July 2003 to attract qualified Mainland talents and professionals who possess skills, knowledge or experience of value to and not readily available locally to work in Hong Kong. A total of 65 143 applications were approved between 2003 and 2013.

¹⁵ QMAS was introduced in June 2006 to attract highly skilled or talented persons from overseas places to settle in Hong Kong. The scheme operates on a points-based system and has an annual quota of 1 000. A total of 2 724 applications were approved between 2006 and 2013.

51. Noting that the Administration planned to implement a pilot scheme to attract the second generation of Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents who had emigrated overseas to return to Hong Kong, some Members enquired about the estimated number of such persons who might return to Hong Kong and the duration of the pilot scheme.

52. The Administration advised that for Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents who had emigrated overseas, their children born overseas after the Mainland's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong had no right of abode in Hong Kong. The pilot scheme sought to attract such persons to return to Hong Kong. It was estimated that such persons might be small in number initially.

Importation of labour

53. With a low unemployment rate and almost full employment in Hong Kong, some Members expressed concern that certain industries, such as the construction, retail, catering, logistics and elderly care services industries, were facing persistent manpower shortage. These Members called on the Administration to consider, under the premise of not depriving local workers of job opportunities and not suppressing local wages, expanding the Supplementary Labour Scheme ("SLS")¹⁶ to address the acute labour shortage problem in these industries. Some Members urged the Administration to consider introducing a special labour importation scheme for public housing and infrastructure works projects. It was also suggested that the Administration should prioritize infrastructure projects according to their degree of urgency and conduct a comprehensive construction manpower survey.

54. Some other Members, however, were concerned that importation of labour under SLS might jeopardize the interest of the labour sector. They were of the view that the Administration should first resolve the unemployment problem of local grass-root workers before contemplating proposals for importation of labour. Noting that the Administration would propose further enhancement measures to SLS to relieve the labour shortage problem in the construction industry, some Members expressed grave concern that the Administration would circumvent LAB in vetting importation of labour applications and asked how the Administration would safeguard the employment of local workforce. These Members were also worried that the introduction of further enhancement measures under SLS would pave way for an expansion of importation of labour.

¹⁶ SLS, implemented in 1996, allows employers to import workers at technician level or below to meet the manpower demand in certain industries which have experienced serious difficulties in recruiting local workers. If the required workers cannot be recruited locally after a four-week open recruitment, LD will submit the SLS application and relevant information to LAB for advice before it is submitted to the Government for approval or otherwise.

55. Members were advised that it had always been the Administration's policy to accord priority to the employment of local workers and safeguarding their wage levels. The Administration would not lightly consider importation of workers without first making its best endeavour to unleash the potential of the local labour force and enhance the training and retraining for local workers. The Administration stressed that only if employers were genuinely unable to recruit the required workers locally would their SLS applications be considered by LAB. In view of the particularly tight manpower situation in the construction industry, the Administration would launch further enhancement measures having regard to the unique characteristics of the construction industry, such as allowing imported skilled workers to work across more than one public sector works project under the same contractor, with a view to enhancing the flexibility of deployment and maximizing the productivity of imported workers. For the time being, the Administration would not introduce a special labour importation scheme for public housing and infrastructure works projects.

56. Noting that the Administration would give priority to construction and elderly cares services industries in considering importation of labour, members enquired whether consideration would also be given to importing labour for other industries which were equally facing severe recruitment difficulties. According to the Administration, while its initial view was that it might be necessary to take early action to address the persistent labour shortage problem in the construction and elderly care services industries, it would also look closely at the manpower situation in other industries and consider prudently the need for importation of labour for these industries under the premise of according priority to the employment of local workers and not jeopardizing their overall interests.

57. Members were further advised that the Administration had been putting resources to enhance the training for local construction and elderly care services personnel and to attract new entrants (particularly young people) to join the industries. Under the "first-hire-then-train" pilot scheme, young people were recruited to provide care services at residential care homes for the elderly and were provided with subsidies to pursue a two-year part-time programme during working days. Upon completion of the first year of training, they would be promoted as health workers. After completion of the programme, they could be promoted to a higher position and pursue further career development in care services. As the response to the pilot scheme was positive, the Administration would allocate additional resources to expand the pilot scheme to cover also rehabilitation services and provide an additional 1 000 places in the coming few years.

Fostering a supportive environment for forming and raising families

Low fertility rate

58. On the issue of raising the fertility rate in Hong Kong, Members pointed out the importance of factors such as education, housing and favourable social environment in affecting couples' childbearing decisions. They enquired about the measures to be taken by the Administration to boost the fertility rate, including whether consideration would be given to providing reproductive technology treatment services in public hospitals and amending the relevant legislation to allow surrogacy.

59. The Administration advised that it had all along been making use of incentive measures such as increasing tax allowances to boost the fertility rate. The Administration was open-minded about the suggestion of providing subsidized reproductive technology services. The Administration would need to listen to the views of the public and the healthcare services sector as the provision of such services would impact on the allocation of resources among various areas of public healthcare services.

Family-friendly measures

60. Some Members pointed out that to encourage more women to join the job market, the Administration should adopt family-friendly measures such as implementing standard working hours and increasing the provision of childcare services. The Administration advised that the way to help women combine family and work was one of the issues addressed by the public engagement exercise on population policy. The Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Women's Commission would conduct a survey on the reasons why Hong Kong women left the labour market and the factors that attracted them to take up employment again, the findings of which would help the Government consider measures to further promote women employment. The survey was expected to be completed by the end of 2014.

Embracing opportunities in an ageing society

\$2 Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme

61. Some Members called on the Administration to expand the "\$2 Transport Fare Concession Scheme" ("\$2 Scheme") to cover persons aged between 60 and 64. They also suggested that the \$2 Scheme should be extended to trams, red minibuses and "kaito".

62. The Administration stressed that as the minimum age requirement for most of the Government's assistance schemes for elderly persons had been set at 65, lowering the age limit for the \$2 Scheme would involve major policy consideration. To create an elderly-friendly environment, the Administration was pressing ahead with the extension of the \$2 Scheme to green mini buses in phases starting from end of March 2015. A comprehensive review of the \$2 Scheme would be conducted around one year after the full implementation of the extension of the scheme to green minibuses. In reviewing the \$2 Scheme, the Administration would study whether there was room for including trams in the scheme. As for red mini-buses and "kaito", the Administration advised that as it had to reimburse the participating operators the fare differential on an accountable basis and as the fares of red minibuses and "kaito" were not regulated by the Transport Department, the Administration would have practical difficulties to extend the Scheme to these modes of public transport.

Long-term care needs of the elderly

63. In view of the ageing population, Members considered that the Administration should study and project the long-term care ("LTC") needs of elderly people in terms of manpower and funding allocation in the next 10 years, with reference to the data and information collected under the Standardized Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services¹⁷.

64. The Administration explained that the number of elderly persons in need of subsidized LTC services in future hinged on various factors such as advancement in medical services, awareness of the public on healthcare, and preference for community care services ("CCS") over residential care services ("RCS"). The Administration had put in place measures to increase the manpower supply of nurses, paramedical staff and front-line care workers. It had also commissioned a local university in 2013 to implement a three-year project on enhancing the infrastructure of LTC services.

65. Members noted that the Administration launched the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly ("CCS Voucher Scheme"), which was to be implemented in two phases over a period of four years, in September 2013. It aimed to facilitate eligible elders to choose the community care services that suited their needs and experiment a new funding mode whereby the Government provided subsidy directly to service users instead of service providers in the form of service vouchers.

¹⁷ Since November 2000, the Social Welfare Department has implemented the Standardized Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services. Under the mechanism, an internationally recognized assessment tool – Minimum Data Set-Home Care – is adopted to ascertain the care needs of elders and match them with appropriate services.

Members were further advised that as the CCS Voucher Scheme had been implemented, the Administration considered it opportune to explore the feasibility of introducing the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly ("RCS Voucher Scheme"), leveraging on the experience of designing the CCS Voucher Scheme. The Elderly Commission was tasked to conduct a feasibility study on the RCS Voucher Scheme and would report to the Government in mid-2015.

Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly

66. Some Members considered that given the long waiting time for subsidized CCS or RCS, some poor elderly persons had no choice but to opt for the CCS Voucher Scheme although they could barely afford the co-payment. These Members took the view that the CCS Voucher Scheme should only be regarded as one of the means of providing CCS. To address the shortage of LTC services, the Administration should explore more ways to increase the provision and types of such services.

67. On Members' concern about the service packages and the implementation schedule for the second phase of the CCS Voucher Scheme, the Administration advised that the Sau Po Centre on Ageing of HKU had been commissioned by the Social Welfare Department to conduct an evaluation study on the first phase of the CCS Voucher Scheme. The Administration would review the service packages of the first phase with a view to allowing more flexibility in the choice of services, thereby providing more personalized services for the eligible elderly persons in the second phase of the CCS Voucher Scheme. The second phase was scheduled to be launched in September 2015 over a period of two years.

Pilot scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly

68. Some Members expressed concern about the participation rate and the service quality of the RCS Voucher Scheme if the services provided under the Scheme would be provided predominately by the residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme ("EBPS"). While the RCS Voucher Scheme would improve the unit cost and occupancy rate of RCHEs in EBPS, these Members took the view that it was not an effective solution to the problem of gross shortage of RCS. They also held the view that beneficiaries of the RCS Voucher Scheme should not be subject to a means test. They were worried that the Scheme would pave the way for the introduction of a means test to subvented RCS in future. Some Members were concerned that the introduction of the RCS voucher scheme would affect the popularity of the CCS Voucher Scheme.

69. According to the Administration, the RCS Voucher Scheme aimed to enable elderly persons, particularly those who were admitted to private RCHEs and were receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA"), to receive better services. It also sought to reduce the waiting time for RCS by making use of places offered by self-financing RCHEs and private RCHEs. Since the "money-follows-users" approach as well as the co-payment and top-up arrangements would be helpful to the sustainability of and the Administration's long-term commitment to the provision of RCS, the RCS Voucher Scheme would test the viability of this new funding mode. The Administration stressed that the conduct of the Elderly Commission's feasibility study on introducing an RCS Voucher Scheme would not detract from the Government's present commitment to providing subsidized RCS for elderly persons. The Administration also advised that as the scopes of CCS and RCS were different, the services provided under the two voucher schemes would not overlap.

70. At its special meeting on 28 March 2015, the Panel on Welfare Services passed a motion urging the Government to, among others, temporarily suspend the implementation of the RCS Voucher Scheme in view of the objection raised by the social services sector and many elderly people, and reinitiate in-depth discussions with various stakeholders.

Retirement protection

71. Members urged the Government to take early planning and preparatory work to address the issue of ageing society. Some Members were concerned about the challenges brought by ageing population to public finances. In this connection, Members noted that a working group led by the Treasury Branch was formed in June 2013 to explore ways to make more comprehensive planning for public finances to cope with the ageing population and other long-term commitments of the Government.¹⁸

72. Members noted that the Government's Commission on Poverty ("CoP") had commissioned a consultancy team led by Professor Nelson CHOW to conduct a study on the future development of retirement protection, which was completed in mid-2014. Having regard to the views expressed by various sectors on the study report of the consultancy team, CoP had decided to conduct a public consultation exercise which was expected to be launched in the fourth quarter of 2015. Public views would be sought on retirement protection proposals, including a universal retirement protection proposal and a means-tested non-universal retirement protection proposal.

¹⁸ The working group, led by the Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury), aims to assess, under existing policies, the long-term public expenditure needs and changes in government revenue, and to propose feasible measures with reference to overseas experience.

73. Some Members requested the Administration to introduce legislation for universal retirement protection within this legislative session, so as to enable implementation of universal retirement protection. Some other Members, however, were opposed to the implementation of a universal non-means-tested retirement protection scheme. While agreeing to provide retirement protection to the needy elderly, these Members expressed concern about the funding source and the community acceptance of making extra contribution by employers and employees under such a proposal. They, however, supported a means-tested scheme which could direct public resources to help the elderly most in need. Some Members took a strong view that the lead time required for preparing the consultation document should be compressed with a view to launching the public consultation as soon as practicable.

74. According to the Administration, apart from setting out proposals on retirement protection, CoP's consultation document would also provide a simple and clear analytical framework for comparing the proposals in various aspects such as their rationales, contents, implications and implementation in order to assist the public in making a choice. On the time required for the preparatory work for the public consultation, the Administration explained that given that C&SD would release the updated population and labour projection sometime in the middle of 2015, CoP members had agreed to make use of the latest projection figures and the projection method adopted in the study report to update the projection of the relevant proposals as well as to explore the feasibility of extending the projection period. The Administration was committed to taking forward the issue on retirement protection as well as launching the public consultation with a view to arriving at a community consensus and identifying the way forward for retirement protection.

Retiring on the Mainland

75. Some Members opined that as Fujian was the ancestral home for many Hong Kong elderly persons, the Administration should consider providing Old Age Allowance ("OAA") for eligible Hong Kong elderly persons residing in Fujian.

76. The Administration advised that while it had no plan to extend the provision of OAA to elderly persons residing in Fujian at this stage, it would not rule out such a possibility. The Administration would study the provision of OAA for elderly persons who chose to retire in places outside Hong Kong in conjunction with the issue of retirement protection, taking policy implications into account.

Relevant motions moved and questions raised in Council

77. In the Fifth LegCo, Members have moved motions without legislative effect and raised questions on population policy and related issues at various Council meetings. The relevant motions and questions are set out in **Appendices I and II** respectively.

Research Brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat

78. In November 2014, the Research Office of the LegCo Secretariat released a Research Brief on "Preparing for population ageing", which highlights various policy measures introduced by overseas places including Singapore, Sweden, France, Finland and the United Kingdom to tackle the challenges of ageing population. The Research Brief is available on the LegCo Website at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/research-publications/english/1415rb01-preparing-for-population-ageing-20141113-e.pdf>.

Legislative Council Secretariat

20 April 2015

Relevant motions moved by Members

In the Fifth Legislative Council (up to 20 April 2015), Members have moved in Council the following motions without legislative effect concerning Hong Kong's population policy and related issues -

- (1) Motion moved by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG on "Universal retirement protection system" at the Council meeting of 24 October 2012

The motion was negatived. The wording of the motion and the official record of proceedings are respectively available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/motion/cm20121024m2.htm>

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1024-translate-e.pdf> (pages 302 to 362)

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1025-translate-e.pdf> (pages 6 to 95)

- (2) Motion moved by Hon Starry LEE on "Actively promoting family-friendly policies" at the Council meeting of 5 June 2013

The motion, as amended by Hon WONG Kwok-hing, Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che and Hon Claudia MO, was passed. The wording of the motion and the official record of proceedings are respectively available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/motion/cm20130605m1.htm>

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0605-translate-e.pdf> (pages 146 to 281)

- (3) Motion moved by Hon IP Kwok-him on "Formulating a population policy" at the Council meeting of 3 July 2013

The motion was negatived. The wording of the motion and the official record of proceedings are respectively available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/motion/cm20130703m2.htm>

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0703-translate-e.pdf> (pages 289 to 406)

- (4) Motion moved by Hon KWOK Wai-keung on "Opposing the expansion of labour importation" at the Council meeting of 13 November 2013

The motion was negatived. The wording of the motion and the official record of proceedings are respectively available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/motion/cm20131113m4.htm>

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1113-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=mbm04> (pages 247 to 375)

- (5) Motion moved by Hon Alice MAK on "Stepping up the promotion of primary healthcare development and improving healthcare services for elderly people" at the Council meeting of 11 December 2013

The motion, as amended by Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki, Hon Albert HO, Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG, Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG, Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau and Hon Frankie YICK, was passed. The wording of the motion and the official record of proceedings are respectively available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/motion/cm20131211m3.htm>

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1211-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=mbm03> (pages 285 to 417)

- (6) Adjournment motion moved by Hon Vincent FANG on "The impact of the Court of Final Appeal's ruling that applicants for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance are not required to have resided in Hong Kong for seven years" at the Council meeting of 8 January 2014

The wording of the motion and the official record of proceedings are respectively available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/motion/cm20140108m6.htm>

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0109-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=r4a> (pages 80 to 113)

- (7) Motion moved by Hon TAM Yiu-chung on "Properly dealing with problems arising from cross-boundary students" at the Council meeting of 26 March 2014

The motion, as amended by Hon IP Kin-yuen, Hon James TIEN, Hon Michael TIEN and Hon TANG Ka-piu, was passed. The wording of the motion and the official record of proceedings are respectively available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/motion/cm20140326m2.htm>

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0326-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=mbm02> (pages 314 to 362)

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0327-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=mbm01> (pages 6 to 77)

- (8) Motion moved by Hon TANG Ka-piu on "Formulating a comprehensive elderly care policy to deal with population ageing" at the Council meeting of 11 June 2014

The motion, as amended by Hon Albert HO, Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG and Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che, was passed. The wording of the motion and the official record of proceedings are respectively available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/motion/cm20140611m3.htm>

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0611-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=mbm03> (pages 301 to 326)

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0612-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=mbm> (pages 6 to 76)

Relevant questions raised by Members

In the Fifth Legislative Council (up to 20 April 2015), Members have raised in Council the following questions concerning Hong Kong's population policy and related issues -

- (1) Oral question raised by Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung on retirement protection scheme at the Council meeting of 14 November 2012

Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired, among other things, how the Government would build consensus in the community regarding the implementation of a universal retirement protection system. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1114-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 9 to 21)

- (2) Oral question raised by Hon LEUNG Che-cheung on promoting respect for the elderly and fostering a sense of worthiness among them at the Council meeting of 5 December 2012

Hon LEUNG Che-cheung enquired, among other things, whether the Government would formulate a policy for assisting the re-employment of the retired elderly aged 60 to 64, such as providing subsidies or tax concessions to private enterprises and public organizations employing the elderly. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1205-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 21 to 32)

- (3) Written question raised by Hon Regina IP on applications for One-way Permits for settlement in Hong Kong by mainland "overage children" at the Council meeting of 5 December 2012

Hon Regina IP enquired, among other things, about the number of applications from mainland overage children for settlement in Hong Kong received and approved by the mainland authorities so far. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1205-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 135 to 138)

- (4) Oral question raised by Hon CHAN Yuen-han on supply and retraining of local labour and importation of foreign labour at the Council meeting of 6 February 2013

Hon CHAN Yuen-han enquired, among other things, whether the Government would enhance the training efforts and resource input so as to secure a sufficient supply of local labour to undertake work in different trades, and whether it would review the existing policy to eradicate the importation of cheap foreign labour by employers under the disguise of the "General Employment Policy" and apprentice training. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0206-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 21 to 35)

- (5) Oral question raised by Hon SIN Chung-kai on review of the system for issuance of One-way Permits at the Council meeting of 20 March 2013

Hon SIN Chung-kai enquired, among other things, whether the Government had assessed the impact brought about by tens of thousands of mainland residents coming to Hong Kong for settlement on One-way Permits every year on the population policy, land planning, job market, livelihood issues of Hong Kong, as well as the demand for welfare, transport and housing, etc. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0320-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 19 to 28)

- (6) Written question raised by Hon WONG Kwok-hing on issuance of one-way permits to eligible mainland "overage children" of Hong Kong residents at the Council meeting of 24 April 2013

Hon WONG Kwok-hing enquired, among other things, whether the Government had conducted any survey on the mainland overage children's lives in Hong Kong, as well as their job seeking and employment situation, etc., with a view to finding out the assistance they needed and their impact on the local labour market. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0424-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 11 to 14)

- (7) Written question raised by Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT on support for women from low income families to take up employment at the Council meeting of 24 April 2013

Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT enquired, among other things, whether the Government would review the existing home-based child care services and consider afresh requiring service operators to increase the amount of incentive payments for their home-based child carers to reasonable levels to attract more experienced women to work as home-based child carers, so that working mothers might go to work without worries and hence a larger women labour force would be released. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0424-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 49 to 56)

- (8) Written question raised by Hon CHAN Kin-por on retirement of disciplined grades civil servant at the Council meeting of 29 May 2013

Hon CHAN Kin-por enquired, among other things, whether the Government had considered establishing a mechanism to allow those disciplined service officers who met relevant requirements to apply for extending their retirement age to 60. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0529-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 102 to 106)

- (9) Oral question raised by Hon IP Kwok-him on measures to encourage local women to give birth at the Council meeting of 5 June 2013

Hon IP Kwok-him enquired, among other things, about the measures introduced/explored by the Government to encourage local women to give birth. The question and the reply are available at :

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0605-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 52 to 63)

- (10) Oral question raised by Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan on measures to alleviate the shortage of doctors in public hospitals at the Council meeting of 19 June 2013

Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan enquired about measures to attract more non-local doctors to apply for work in Hong Kong, so as to alleviate the shortage of doctors and enhance the quality of medical services. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0619-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 87 to 99)

- (11) Written question raised by Hon WONG Kwok-kin on the provision of social welfare services for Hong Kong elderly people residing on the Mainland at the Council meeting of 17 July 2013

Hon WONG Kwok-kin enquired, among other things, whether the Government would expeditiously study the feasibility of providing Old Age Living Allowance to elderly people residing in Guangdong and, in the long run, consider providing such elderly people with the social welfare benefits enjoyed by local elderly people. The question and the reply are available at:
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0717-translate-e.pdf>
(pages 112 to 115)

- (12) Written question raised by Hon Gary FAN on immigration statistics at the Council meeting of 9 October 2013

Hon Gary FAN sought information on Hong Kong's migrant population and immigration policy. The question and the reply are available at:
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1009-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq12>
(pages 105 to 113)

- (13) Written question raised by Hon IP Kwok-him on the employment situation of new arrivals from the mainland settling in Hong Kong at the Council meeting of 23 October 2013

Hon IP Kwok-him enquired, among other things, whether the Government had conducted any analysis to identify the factors contributing to the low labour force participation rate of new immigrants and whether it had assessed the effectiveness of the employment support services being provided to them. The question and the reply are available at:
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1023-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq12>
(pages 104 to 107)

- (14) Oral question raised by Dr Hon Helena WONG on child care services at the Council meeting of 13 November 2013

Dr Hon Helena WONG enquired, among other things, whether the Government had any specific plan to enhance the quality and quantity of child care services, in order to enable more women who had young children to rejoin the labour market and unleash the female labour force. The question and the reply are available at:
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1113-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=orq01>
(pages 9 to 24)

- (15) Written question raised by Prof Hon Joseph LEE on infertility treatment using assisted reproductive technologies at the Council meeting of 27 November 2013

Prof Hon Joseph LEE enquired, among other things, whether the Government had assessed the demand for reproductive technology treatment services in the coming 10 years and the expenditure and manpower required to enhance public hospitals' reproductive technology treatment services to meet the demand. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1127-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq11>

(pages 113 to 116)

- (16) Oral question raised by Hon Christopher CHEUNG on welfare benefits for the elderly people of Hong Kong residing in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces at the Council meeting of 4 December 2013

Hon Christopher CHEUNG enquired, among other things, why the Old Age Allowance was provided only to the eligible elderly people residing in Guangdong Province but not to those in Fujian Province, and whether the Government would explore the feasibility of allowing eligible elderly people who chose to reside in Guangdong Province or Fujian Province to receive Old Age Living Allowance. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1204-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=orq02>

(pages 46 to 56)

- (17) Oral question raised by Hon WONG Kwok-kin on provision of medical services to Hong Kong elderly people residing on the Mainland at the Council meeting of 4 December 2013

Hon WONG Kwok-kin enquired, among other things, whether Government had assessed the demand of Hong Kong elderly persons residing on the Mainland for medical services in Hong Kong and whether it had formulated policies to offer support to these elderly people. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1204-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=orq03>

(pages 57 to 65)

- (18) Oral question raised by Hon James TIEN on the residence requirement for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance at the Council meeting of 8 January 2014

Hon James TIEN enquired, among other things, whether the Government had studied if the shortening of residence requirement under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme would place a heavy financial burden on Hong Kong and whether it would adjust its policies or adopt corresponding measures, e.g. requesting the mainland authorities to set "financially self-sufficient and possession of earning capacity" as one of the conditions for approving Mainlanders' applications for settlement in Hong Kong, so as to ensure proper use of public resources. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0108-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=orq03>

(pages 70 to 81)

- (19) Written question raised by Hon James TO on Quality Migrant Admission Scheme at the Council meeting of 8 January 2014

Hon James TO sought information on talents who were granted approval for settlement in Hong Kong under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0108-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq16>

(pages 175 to 177)

- (20) Oral question raised by Hon SIN Chung-kai on the vetting and approval of mainlanders' applications for settlement in Hong Kong at the Council meeting of 22 January 2014

Hon SIN Chung-kai enquired, among other things, about the occasions on which the Central People's Government consulted the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR") Government on the number of persons entering Hong Kong for the purpose of settlement and the views given by the HKSAR Government on each occasion, and whether there were past cases in which the HKSAR Government specifically participated in vetting and approving the applications of individual mainlanders for settlement in Hong Kong. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0122-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=orq04>

(pages 46 to 55)

- (21) Written question raised by Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG on the impact of the shortening of residence requirement under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme at the Council meeting of 22 January 2014

Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG enquired, among other things, whether the Government had assessed the number of mainland people who would be attracted by the shortened residence requirement under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme to apply for settlement in Hong Kong, and whether it had plans to introduce targeted measures to ensure the continued stability and healthiness of the public finances of Hong Kong given the anticipated increase in the expenditure on the Scheme. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0122-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq07>

(pages 79 to 81)

- (22) Written question raised by Hon WONG Yuk-man on the implementation of Article 22(4) of the Basic Law at the Council meeting of 12 February 2014

Hon WONG Yuk-man enquired, among other things, whether the Central People's Government had consulted, in accordance with Article 22(4) of the Basic Law, the HKSAR Government on the number of persons to be approved to enter HKSAR for the purpose of settlement and the relevant details. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0212-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq06>

(pages 27 to 29)

- (23) Written question raised by Hon Paul TSE on immigration policy and Comprehensive Social Security Assistance for new immigrants at the Council meeting of 26 February 2014

Hon Paul TSE enquired, among other things, whether the Government would make reference to overseas immigration policies/practices and draw up measures for alleviating the pressure posed by new arrivals on Hong Kong's welfare expenditure, such as amending the residence requirement of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme or imposing appropriate additional conditions by means of administrative orders, legislative amendments or enactment of legislation. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0226-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq16>

(pages 99 to 102)

- (24) Written question raised by Hon Jeffrey LAM on the Supplementary Labour Scheme at the Council meeting of 16 April 2014

Hon Jeffrey LAM enquired, among other things, whether the Government had considered simplifying the vetting and approval process of the Supplementary Labour Scheme and lowering the application conditions to address the problem of insufficient labour supply being faced by some industries in Hong Kong. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0416-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq01>

(pages 8 to 10)

- (25) Written question raised by Hon James TIEN on importation of construction workers at the Council meeting of 16 April 2014

Hon James TIEN enquired, among other things, whether the Government had assessed the extent to which the manpower shortage problem of the construction industry would be alleviated by expediting the labour importation processes for public works projects administered by the Labour Advisory Board, and whether it had assessed the impacts of the shortage of construction workers due to the failure to timely import labour on the progress and costs of public works projects. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0416-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq09>

(pages 38 to 44)

- (26) Oral question raised by Hon TAM Yiu-chung on tackling challenges arising from an ageing population and a shrinking labour Force at the Council meeting of 25 June 2014

Hon TAM Yiu-chung enquired, among other things, whether the Government had studied and formulated measures to tackle the prevailing challenges arising from an ageing population and a shrinking labour force, so as to maintain Hong Kong's competitiveness. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0625-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=orq01>

(Pages 8 to 21)

- (27) Oral question raised by Hon Alice MAK on promotion of vocational education at the Council meeting of 9 July 2014

Hon Alice MAK enquired, among other things, whether the Government had formulated any measures to reinforce and promote vocational education in the community, so as to raise public awareness and recognition of vocational education. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0709-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=orq02>

(Pages 69 to 79)

- (28) Oral question raised by Hon James TIEN on importation of construction workers at the Council meeting of 9 July 2014

Hon James TIEN enquired, among other things, whether the Government would consider introducing a special labour importation scheme for public housing and infrastructure works projects, so as to ensure that such works projects would be completed on schedule. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0709-translate-e.pdf#nameddest=orq03>

(Pages 79 to 88)

- (29) Oral question raised by Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok on the importation of construction works at the Council meeting of 17 December 2014

Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok enquired, among other things, whether the Government would conduct a manpower survey in collaboration with the construction sector to facilitate a comprehensive review of the policy on importation of construction workers. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/counmtg/hansard/cm20141217-translate-e-e.pdf#nameddest=orq06>

(pages 59 to 69)

- (30) Oral question raised by Hon James TIEN on measures to tackle problem of shortage of skilled workers in the construction industry at the Council meeting of 28 January 2015

Hon James TIEN enquired, among other things, whether the Government would consider afresh the introduction of a special labour importation scheme for public housing and infrastructure works projects. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/counmtg/hansard/cm20150128-translate-e-e.pdf#nameddest=orq01>

(pages 7 to 19)

- (31) Written question raised by Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai on measures to address challenges brought by demographic changes on 28 January 2015

Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai enquired about issues relating to extension of the retirement age of civil servants, suspension of the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme, and the Government's plans for recruiting talent and professionals from outside Hong Kong who met the needs of Hong Kong's economy and long-term development. The question and the reply are available at:

http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/counmtg/hansard/cm20150128-translat e-e.pdf#nameddest=SP_MB_LTF_00256

(pages 145 to 152)

- (32) Written question raised by Hon James TIEN on retirement protection at the Council meeting of 11 February 2015

Hon James TIEN enquired about the Government's plans for improving the retirement protection in Hong Kong. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/counmtg/hansard/cm20150211-translat e-e.pdf#nameddest=wrq11>

(pages 72 to 74)

- (33) Written question raised by Hon Tony TSE on nurturing talents for the architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape professions at the Council meeting of 15 April 2015

Hon Tony TSE enquired, among others, whether the Government would, in studying the feasibility of drawing up a talent list for attracting talents from outside Hong Kong, include talents for the architectural, surveying, town planning and landscape professions in such list. The question and the reply are available at:

<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201504/15/P201504150333.htm>